



November 20, 2016

County of San Diego  
Planning and Development Services  
ATTN: Bulmaro Canseco  
CAP Project Manager  
5510 Overland Ave, Suite 110  
San Diego CA 92123

**RE: Notice of Preparation for Climate Action Plan and General Plan Amendment**

Dear Mr. Canseco:

Endangered Habitats League (EHL) appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Climate Action Plan (CAP) process. For your reference, EHL is Southern California's only regional conservation group and a long-term stakeholder in County planning efforts.

We understand the purpose of the CAP as complying with the court's order for providing measurable and enforceable GHG mitigation measures for the 2011 General Plan and meeting SB 32 targets. We commend the County for forthrightly proposing to adhere to these new targets.

We have the following scoping comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP):

**Adequacy of the NOP**

The NOP does not contain enough information about the CAP or the proposed General Plan amendments to allow us to provide meaningful comments on the scope of environmental analysis that should be conducted. It references the pertinent State standards for GHG reduction, lists the generic means toward this end, and lists the sectors in which reductions will occur. However, the generalities of "strategies, measures, and actions" are never fleshed out in a way which would let the reader understand the substance of the proposed CAP. Likewise, the NOP does not describe the proposed General Plan amendments in any detail, except to say that such amendments will "reflect the requirements of SB 32." Contrary to the CEQA Guidelines, the NOP does not specify probable environmental effects.<sup>1</sup> We request additional information in order to provide more meaningful comments.

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<sup>1</sup> **15082. Notice of Preparation and Determination of Scope of EIR**

(a) Notice of Preparation. Immediately after deciding that an environmental impact report is required for a project, the lead agency shall send to the Office of Planning and Research and each responsible and trustee agency a notice of preparation stating that an

## Scope of the project

The NOP states that there will be an EIR which provides program-level analysis for the CAP as well as a Supplement to the 2011 GPU PEIR to evaluate General Plan amendments related to the CAP. Regarding the proposed amendment(s) to the General Plan, based upon the information in the NOP, any such amendment would be *restricted* to bringing the General Plan into compliance with the new SB 32 GHG-reduction targets, which were not in effect in 2011. This intent is reflected in the NOP's statement that the County will "update" listed goals, policies, and mitigation measures<sup>2</sup> to "reflect the requirements of SB 32." If any other changes to the General Plan are anticipated, such amendments must be disclosed in a revised NOP.

The NOP (page 6) provides a comprehensive list of categories of impact that will be disclosed in the CAP impact analysis. It also states that the scope of analysis for the GPU Supplement—for the described changes to goals, policies, and mitigation measures—"would be limited to GHG Emissions/Global Climate Change." We concur with these approaches.

## Baseline for future GHG emissions and reductions

The only proper baseline for forecasting future GHG emissions and proposed reductions is the 2011 General Plan *as adopted*. EHL is aware of several pending applications to amend the General Plan to allow leapfrog development, suburban "expansions" to villages that overwhelm the villages themselves, conversion of farmland to urban uses, and intensification of dispersed rural residential uses across huge areas. All of these proposed locations are highly automobile dependent with per capita VMT far above the regional mean and without meaningful present or future transit opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

Since these pending General Plan amendments have not been adopted, they are *not* part of the 2011 General Plan baseline, and should be analyzed *only* in the cumulative impacts section of the CAP EIR. The likely added GHG emissions and VMTs (resulting in additional GHG emissions) from any pending General Plan amendments should be analyzed and quantified cumulatively in order to help understand whether they would

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environmental impact report will be prepared. This notice shall also be sent to every federal agency involved in approving or funding the project.

(1) The notice of preparation shall provide the responsible and trustee agencies and the Office of Planning and Research with sufficient information describing the project and the potential environmental effects to enable the responsible agencies to make a meaningful response. At a minimum, the information shall include:

(A) Description of the project,

(B) Location of the project (either by street address and cross street, for a project in an urbanized area, or by attaching a specific map, preferably a copy of a U.S.G.S. 15' or 7-1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name), and

(C) Probable environmental effects of the project.

<sup>2</sup> COS-20, COS 2.1, CC-1.2, and possibly CC-1.7 and CC-1.8

<sup>3</sup> See <[http://sandag.github.io/sb743/sb743\\_concept\\_map.htm](http://sandag.github.io/sb743/sb743_concept_map.htm)>

impede achieving a GHG reduction target consistent with the reductions mandated under SB 32 and as identified in the CAP.

Any kind of pathway for GHG compliance for unapproved GPAs is *beyond the scope* of this CAP, whose purpose is limited to mitigating the impacts of the current General Plan in order to achieve SB 32 targets. Any GPAs that are ultimately approved will have to found consistent with the regional reductions in GHG emissions in a newly revised CAP. It also follows that the CAP-based thresholds of significance required by the General Plan should reflect the reductions needed to meet the 2030 targets in order to mitigate emissions from build-out of the 2011 General Plan.

### **Methodologies for the CAP**

Although not strictly an NOP issue, the proposed use of a single-year 2014 inventory (not discussed in the NOP) would have to show at a minimum that emissions in this single year were not aberrant. Otherwise, an average of multiple years should be used. Targets for 2030 based on the inventory year (or years) will need to be derived using sound extrapolation methodologies to achieve the requisite 40% reduction below 1990 levels.

While also not an NOP issue, we note that the “Efficiency Metric” approach in the County’s interim guidance document, which provides only a per person (as opposed to a regional) limit on GHGs, bears no demonstrably logical relationship to the mandate to achieve County-wide reductions consistent with the SB 32 targets that govern the revised CAP. The CAP’s measurement criteria, by contrast, should be constructed to ensure the County will not exceed its share of GHG emissions under SB 32.

### **Alternatives**

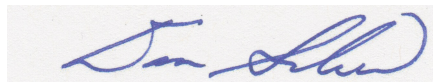
We request public workshops on alternatives subsequent to the GHG inventory and the setting of the 2030 targets, but well prior to the release of the DEIR. These workshops should explore options to mitigate the GHG impacts of the 2011 General Plan.

### **Vertical integration**

There should be vertical integration of GHG emissions from the local to regional to state levels. This has legal and policy basis. State law requires California to reduce its own *California* emissions. Allowable GHG emissions *in the State* are progressively lowered, even though the cap and trade system allows purchase of emissions credits in cooperating non-California jurisdictions. In turn, SB 375 requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations to reduce transportation and built environment sector emissions in their respective regions through Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS). These must do their fair share in achieving the State targets. Finally, local governments must integrate with the regional goals and attain them. In order not to undermine the tiers above them, local jurisdictions’ plans have to be *at least as* protective as the plans above them.

Thank you for considering our comments and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Silver", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Dan Silver  
Executive Director